



## **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

490 North Meridian Rd.  
Kalispell, MT 59901  
(406) 751-4580  
FAX: 406-257-0349  
REF:DV176-98.wpd  
February 12, 1998

Dear Interested Party:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is reviewing an application for a proposed 9.137 acre expansion to the existing elk game farm licenced by Grant Spoklie, 658 White Basin Rd., Kalispell. The existing game farm is permitted to hold up to 60 elk on approximately 82 acres of pasture and forest lands located south of Kalispell at the Grant Spoklie address listed above and shown on Attachment A. The proposed expansion is located in Section 4 T27N, R21W. The public comment period for the new proposed 9.137 acre expansion will run from February 13, 1998 to March 6, 1998, 22 days.

### **Description of the Proposed Expansion**

The proposed 9.137 acre expansion is located immediately adjacent to existing quarantine facilities and occupies existing pasture land (Attachment A). The new pasture would be leased from adjacent landowners and could be irrigated. The proposed expansion would not incorporate any timberlands or riparian/wetlands. The fence would be located at least 20 feet from existing wetlands associated with Patrick Creek. The fences would tie directly to the existing licensed game farm. If the proposed 9+ acre expansion is approved, the Spoklie game farm would comprise just under 100 acres for 60 elk.

The existing elk game farm license conditions, listed below, would apply to the expansion area:

1. The licensee or manager must report to FWP the ingress of any game animal or any predators of ungulates (e.g. mountain lion, black bear, grizzly bear or coyote) immediately upon the discovery and the reason for such ingress).
2. FWP reserves the right to require fence/gate modifications (such as, but not limited to double fencing, electrical outriggers, solid board panels) to those portions of fence when problems with tree or snag blowdowns occur that compromise fence integrity or when the previously constructed fence may prove to be inadequate to prevent ingress/egress of game animals or game farm animals.

*Flathead*

3. FWP has conducted a MEPA review based upon the number of animals (60) and acreage (82) specified in the license application and expansions. A supplemental MEPA review may be required if the applicant increases the number of animals above 60.
4. Licensee must comply with DoL requirements for movement of animals between non-contiguous pastures within the game farm.

**Draft EA**

A draft Environmental Assessment (EA) issued in June, 1997, addressed a previous game expansion at the same site (from 43 acres to 82 acres and from 40 to 60 elk). After reviewing the proposed 9+ acre expansion, FWP has determined that the proposed expansion raises no new environmental issues; the environmental effects of the proposed expansion are already addressed by the prior draft EA. The only difference is that the 9+ acre expansion does not contain any wetlands nor forest habitats and that it will increase the overall game farm area by approximately 10%. This increase will have the same cumulative impacts as the first expansion. The cumulative impacts are not considered significant.

To help in your review, we have attached the summary from the most recent draft EA (Attachment B) which addressed the last expansion. You may request a complete copy of the prior draft EA by checking the appropriate box on the enclosed self-addressed card.

If you would like to receive FWP's Final Decision Notice for this proposed expansion, please indicate this on the enclosed card and return as well.

**To Comment**

The public comment period will close Friday, March 6, 1998. Comments should be sent to: Brian Sommers, FWP, 490 N. Meridian Rd. Kalispell, MT 59901 post-marked no later than March 6, 1998. For more information, contact Brian Sommers at (406)751-4562 or Gael Bissell at (406) 751-4580.

Sincerely,



Dan Vincent  
Regional Supervisor



Enclosures

Spoklie Expansion Letter

February 12, 1998

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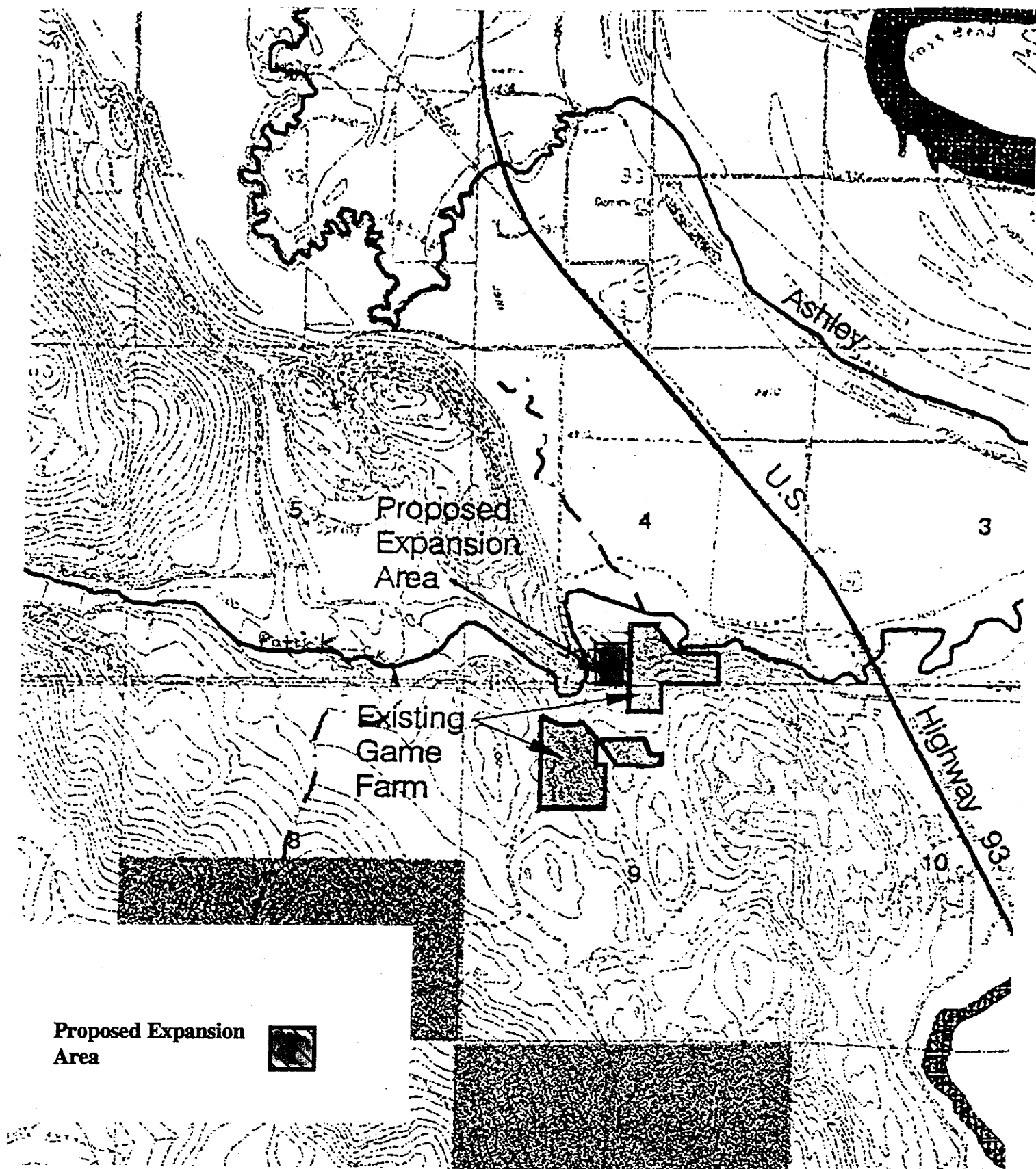
- c: Mr Brad Borden, Box 2062, Kalispell, 59903-2062  
Clarence Torgerson, 456 Fir Terrace, Kalispell, 59901  
Thomas Reed, 4492 Solano, Fairfield, CA 94533-6607  
Jeff Braunberger, 806 3rd Av. W., Kalispell, 59901  
Arthur Otto, 333 Shelter Valley Dr., Kalispell, 59901  
Thorco Inc., PO Box 1557, Kalispell, 59903-1557  
McKenzie Co. Inc., PO Box 13, Lakeside, 59922  
Jeff Whitecraft, PO Box 3524, Lewistown, 59457  
Neil McDaniel, 432 E. Idaho St. #14b, Kalispell, 59901  
Ed Christian, PO Box 20798, Juneau, AK 99802  
Russ Meduna, 830 E. Nichols Av., Littleton, CO 80122  
Sandra Card, 340 Rv Terrace, Kalispell, 59901  
Quentin Vitt, 260 Vitt Cove, Kalispell, 59901  
Dolores Mawgel, 700 White Basin Rd., Kalispell, 59901  
Marty Botwinick, 1032 Nittghlain Av., Los Angeles, CA 90038  
Geraldine Backes, 720 White Basin Rd., Kalispell, 59901  
Tim Donell, 46 West View Dr., Kalispell, 59901  
Curtis Lingle, 125 White Basin Court, Kalispell, 59901  
John Kouns, 119 White Basin Court, Kalispell, 59901  
Flathead Regional Dev. Office, 723 5th E., Rm 414, Kalispell, 59901  
Flathead National Forest, 1935 Third Av. E., Kalispell, 59901  
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, PO Box 595, Helena, 59624  
Montana Wildlife Federation, PO Box 1175, Helena, 59624  
Arlene Montgomery, Friends Of The Wild Swan, PO Box 5103, Swan Lake, 59911  
Herb Johnson, 63 Hawthorne Av. Apt. 2, Kalispell, 59901  
Flathead Wildlife Inc., Bob Cole, PO Box 4, Kalispell, 59904  
Ben Long, The Daily Inter Lake, PO Box 7610, Kalispell, 59901  
Ken Oberndorfer, 418 Fir Terrace, Kalispell, 59901  
Joy Schaefer, 74-940 Hwy St 3 110, Indian Wells, CA 92210  
Environment Quality Council, Capitol Bldg., Helena, 59620-1704  
Dept. Of Environ. Quality, Metcalf Bldg., PO Box 200901, Helena, 59620-0901  
Montana Historical Soc., State Historic Pres., Ofc., 225 N. Roberts Veteran's Memorial Bldg., Helena, 59620-1201  
Montana State Library, 1515 E Sixth Av., Helena, 59620-1800  
Jim Jensen, Montana Environ. Info. Cntr., PO Box 1184, Helena, 59624  
George Ochenski, PO Box 689, Helena, 59624  
Montana River Action Network, PO Box 8298, Bozeman, 59773-8298  
Louella Schultz, Game Farm Prog. Spec., DoL, PO Box 202001, Helena, 59620-2001  
Grant Spoklie, 658 White Basin Rd., Kalispell, 59901  
Flathead Co. Commissioners, 800 S Main, Kalispell, 59901  
Rep. Paul Sliter, 604 5th Av. E., Kalispell, 59901  
Sen. Larry Baer, 6093 Hwy 35, Bigfork, 59911  
Flathead Co. Library, 247 First W., Kalispell, 59901  
Mary Danford, 1570 Lehi Ln., Kalispell, 59901  
Joe Gutkoski, 304 N. 18th, Bozeman, 59715  
Bruce Barta, MALP President, 190 First N. Ashuelot Rd., Fort Shaw, 59443  
Randy Weaver, Border Pipe & Supply, 501 E. Main, Cutbank, 59427  
Stan Frasier, Box 5841, Helena, 59624

## **ATTACHMENT A**

**Location of the Proposed 9.137 acre expansion for the  
Spoklie Game Farm.**

**Proposed Expansion  
Area**





**Attachment A. Location of the Proposed 9.137 acre expansion for the Spoklie Game Farm.**

**ATTACHMENT B**

**Summary pages 36- 38 from Draft Environmental Assessment  
Grant Spoklie Game Farm Expansion  
(1st Expansion)**

**June 20, 1997**

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (Continued)**

### **2. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA**

- a. Does the Proposed Action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively considerable? (A project may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)

There is some minor cumulative impact associated with the proposed expansion areas and the existing enclosures forcing wild deer to alter their daily movements through this area. This cumulative impact is largely mitigated by passage corridors between three of the four pastures upon project completion.

- b. Does the Proposed Action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?

An unlikely, but extremely hazardous event should it occur, would be the spread of a disease or parasite from domestic elk to wild elk, deer or moose. The risk of this event occurring can be reduced by following the mitigations listed in Sections 5 and 8.

- c. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the Proposed Action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative would avoid the cumulative nature of potential impacts listed above. The existing game farm would remain a minor obstacle for wild deer, a potential source of disease and parasites for wild deer and elk, an attractant to large carnivores, and a minor loss of white-tailed deer winter range. This site would likely be logged and subdivided if the No Action Alternative is selected. The No Action Alternative would probably not result in exclusion of wildlife from this site but the increased human activity in this area may exclude sensitive wildlife species.

- d. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

The following standard game farm management practices would help to minimize impacts to free ranging fish and wildlife species. Implementation of these practices is highly recommended and should be considered a form of mitigation.

1. Storage of hay, feed, and salt should be away from exterior fences or enclosed in bear-resistant containers or buildings.
2. Feeding of game farm animals should be at interior portions of the enclosure and not along the perimeter fence.
3. Dead animals, excess fecal material, and waste feed should be removed from the game farm and deposited at an approved site not likely to be used by humans, and domestic animals and wild animals.
4. The exterior game farm fence should be inspected on a regular basis and immediately after events likely to damage the fence to insure its integrity with respect to trees, burrowing animals, predators and other game animals. Trees on either side of the perimeter fence with the potential to blow down in a storm and damage the fence should be removed.

5. The ingress of any wild game animals or egress of domestic elk should be reported to FWP within 5 days. The reason why or how ingress/egress was achieved should also be reported. This information would help both the applicant and FWP to address such incidents and to help insure that the contact between wild and domestic animals is eliminated or at least kept to a minimum.
6. If fence integrity or ingress/egress becomes a problem, adjustment of fence requirements to include double fencing, increased post support, or increased height may become necessary.
7. During winters of exceptional snow cover, removal of snow on either side the of the enclosure fence may be required to prevent ingress and egress.



### **PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

**Wildlife use of the area and potential for through-the-fence contact with game farm animals (consider year-around use, traditional seasonal habitat use, and location of travel routes and migration corridors).**

Through the fence contact: The proposed game farm is located in moderate density white-tailed deer habitat and in low density mule deer, elk and moose habitat. The existing and proposed game farm expansion is located within a small portion of white-tailed deer winter range but significant numbers of other big game species are not expected in this area. If wild deer, elk, and moose pass through this area there is potential for nose-to-nose contact through the enclosure fence. Nose-to-nose contact is most likely to occur between wild and domestic elk and unlikely to occur between domestic elk and wild deer or moose. In addition, wild elk may be attracted to domestic elk during the rut. Transmission of disease or parasites may occur during nose-to-nose contact, nose-to-body contact, and by contacting vegetation and feces along the fence line. Disease transmission may occur from wild ungulates to domestic elk and from domestic elk to wild ungulates. Risk of disease transmission can be reduced by maintaining the integrity of the enclosure fence, by maintaining a healthy domestic elk population, and by following the above listed mitigation recommendations.

**Potential for escape of game farm animals or ingress of wildlife (consider site-specific factors that could reduce the effectiveness of perimeter fences built to standards outlined in Rule 12.6.1503A, including steepness of terrain, winter snow depths/drifts, susceptibility of fences to flood damage, etc.).**

Fence integrity: The proposed fence would consist of 8-foot high, 6-inch mesh, high tensile big game fencing; supported by 12-foot long, 3-inch diameter pipe driven 3.5 feet into the soil. Fence posts would be spaced at 20-foot intervals. The proposed enclosure site is located on slightly inclined and hilly terrain with a moderate site potential for construction of the proposed enclosures. The majority of each expansion pasture includes forested habitat, and there is a possibility of windthrown trees breaking the integrity of the enclosure fence. The likelihood of a serious fence breach by windthrown trees would be reduced by clearing a 20-foot path on either side of exterior big game fences. Cleared paths along exterior fences, however, may encourage wild deer and elk and domestic elk to walk along the fence line and increase the chances of nose-to-nose contact.

The proposed enclosure site is located at an elevation of 3,000 feet and the expected snow levels are normally around 1-2 feet, with a maximum potential for 3-4 feet. Drifting of snow is not expected within forested habitats but there is some potential for drifting in the meadow portion of the proposed 23-acre enclosure. Under extreme conditions of snow cover the height of the fence above compacted snow level may be sufficiently reduced to permit ingress of wild ungulates into the enclosure to gain access of supplemental feed. Removal of snow drifts from either side of the fence in drift prone areas may be necessary during winter.

**Proportion (%) of the total habitat area currently used by wildlife that would be enclosed or otherwise impacted.**

Less than 1% of the existing wet meadow habitat along Patrick Creek and less than 1% of the forested habitat in this general area would be enclosed by the proposed pastures. Cumulatively, the enclosed habitats would be less than 1% of the available habitats in this area. This loss of native habitat would be insignificant in relation to availability of similar habitat in the surrounding area. The proposed enclosure would not significantly displace other wildlife species.

#### **Evaluation:**

A review of the license application and the elements within this environmental review indicate that the potential for conflict in the social and physical environments is extremely low.

## **PART IV. EA CONCLUSION**

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? YES / NO

No

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this Proposed Action:

The appropriate level of analysis for the Proposed Action is a mitigated EA because:

- all impacts of the Proposed Action have been accurately identified in the EA;
- no significant impact is likely to occur.

2. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the Proposed Action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

During preparation of the Draft EA, adjacent landowners were consulted for anticipated adverse or positive impacts to the area in the vicinity of the proposed expansion from the Proposed Action. Upon completion of the Draft EA, a notice is sent to adjoining landowners, the local newspapers, and other potentially affected interests, explaining the project and asking for input during a 21-day comment period. The Draft EA is also available to the public through the State Bulletin Board System during the public comment period, and from the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks at 406-752-5501.

3. Duration of comment period if any: 21 days

4. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:

Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Gael Bissel, Region I Wildlife Biologist  
Brian Sommers, Region I Game Warden

Karen Zackheim, FWP Game Farm Coordinator  
Ashley Schannauer, FWP Legal Counsel

Maxim Technologies

Alice Stanley, Project Manager  
Doug Rogness, Hydrologist  
Mike Cormier, Soil Scientist  
Terry Grotbo, MEPA Specialist  
Sally Staley, GIS and Graphics

FaunaWest Wildlife Consultants

Craig Knowles, Wildlife Biologist

Other

Candace Durran, Vegetation Specialist